
Planting and growing churches in Assosa, Ethiopia!

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Dear friends,

Assosa, Ethiopia! Here are some facts about the town:

- It is a medium-sized town in Western Ethiopia.
- It is the capital of the region (state) of Benishangul-Gumuz.

- It is one of the main places we are working in here in Ethiopia.

Here's the latest about some of our ministries in Assosa.



Church planting

If we are about one thing, it is planting and growing churches in Ethiopia. Currently, we have three fully planted churches and two partially planted churches in Assosa. In the past two years, we've seen more than 120 people come to Christ in these five areas. Four of these churches predominantly reach out to the Gumuz people group (Assosa town, Abram, Mengi, Assosa University Church). One of these churches targets the Oromo people group (Bambasi).



Traditional drums are an important part of the service.

CMF, in partnership with generous donors, has invested heavily in land and buildings to be used for ministry this past year. We have purchased two pieces of property and have already built a church and training center on one of them.

This new church building is the site of our flagship church in Assosa and is currently being used for church leader trainings and office space for our various ministries in the area.

Water/health project

This past year, I was in Assosa meeting with an Ethiopian ministry partner, Lamesa, who used to be in the military. He had a Muslim friend from his time in the military that he had not seen in years. As it happens, this friend, Harun, lives in Assosa. Lemesa and I met Harun for lunch. We found out that Harun was “Commander Harun,” the head of the state prison in Assosa. During lunch, our conversation shifted toward a need the prison had. They were in desperate need of a clean water source. The city water was becoming very unreliable (sometimes only once per week). I mentioned that we do water projects in other parts of Ethiopia. He asked me to consider doing a water project for the prison. I asked, “If we put in a water system at the prison, could I bring in evangelists to do ministry with the prisoners?”

A few months ago, CMF, with a grant from IDES, installed a water system in the prison at Assosa. Now, about 1,500 prisoners and 100 guards have daily access to clean drinking water.



Allison checks out the well drilling

operation at the Assosa Prison.

Prison outreach

We became connected to the prison in Assosa in several ways. Obviously, we've got a water project going on that has opened up relationships with the upper leadership at the prison, but we were semi-connected to the prison before that. Our church plant in the village of Abramam is populated primarily by police and soldiers. Some of these folks work as guards in the prison.

Currently, we have evangelists and other church folks from Assosa going into the Assosa prison once a week to do Bible studies with prisoners. Also, Allison brings in medicines for the prison infirmary about once a month. In the future, we hope to incorporate a sports program and also English classes as a way to engage more of the prisoners in our ministry.



Allison gets to know a guard and a prisoner.

Training church leaders

We regularly hold several kinds of trainings with various types of church leaders in Assosa. I work specifically with five church planters, but we also get elders, evangelists and other leaders together from all five areas for a full day of Bible and leadership training. These trainings have not only increased the biblical literacy of these leaders but they also build a sense of community across all five of our churches in the area.

Allison has been focusing on working with women in leadership positions in the churches in Assosa. She has made a concerted effort to encourage these women to connect with one another and to become more effective in reaching out to women in their communities.

We plan to increase the frequency and complexity of our trainings in the future. We recently bought a piece of property near the large university in Assosa. We are about to start a building project that will see the completion of a CMF ministry center in Assosa. This ministry center will not only provide church leader training for Assosa area leaders but will also be a place where we can bring church leaders in from all over the entire state. Currently, we work with about 50 churches all across the Benishangul-Gumuz region.





Campus ministry

Assosa is home to several universities and colleges. Our new property and ministry center will be located just in front of the entrance to the largest of these universities. Our campus ministry will be connected to the new church we are planting in that area. We hope to have a cafe with computers and copiers at the ministry center. In addition, we are planning on doing other outreaches, including a sports program and an English class in connection with Bible studies and worship services targeting college age students.

Also, as part of the campus outreach, we hope to have a vibrant college internship program where we have several American college students intern with us each semester. We believe these interns from the U.S. will be very important in helping us develop relationships with Ethiopian students as well as be a vital part of our outreach efforts.



Ezra and several guys from church in front of the new Assosa University.

Assosa ministry

We have added more than 120 new believers and five church plants in the past two years!



Love,

The Fowler family

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